

**Middletown Public Schools
200 LaRosa Lane
Middletown, CT. 06457**

March 9, 2009

Dear Middlesex County Legislators:

Please do not support SB No. Bill 830 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION REGARDING EDUCATION as written. It recommends cutting the Healthy Food Certification by 5 cents per meal. Mary Ann Lopez, President of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT) gave testimony on February 11, 2009 regarding this reduction in funding to our child nutrition programs in Connecticut.

I agree with SNACT President Lopez that the 10 cents currently offered for Healthy Food Certification should continue as it. Healthy Food Certification is one part of the whole child nutrition program and continuing to provide the 10 cents will help to offset the cost of healthy and nutritious variety of ala carte items being offered.

In addition, I also agree, that the block grant, legislated in the early 1980's, a total of \$2.3 million, be changed to a per meal payment. Currently the block grant provides us just under 4.5 cents per meal. Our programs and meals served have grown considerably since the 1980's. The costs of food, labor and insurances have risen considerably since then and yet because the funding is a block grant it continues to decline in size. Our costs today are about \$1.00 over what the Federal and State reimbursement payments are for a fee meal. This means that we need to offer alternatives to the meals we serve (aka ala carte) to help support the fiscal side of our programs.

I agree with the request of \$0.25 for each meal to close the gap between our costs and our actual income from meals served. We have raised prices for the meals paid for by the students. The price for a meal typically is driven by the costs in preparing minus any reimbursement we receive from the Federal or State governments and is determined by the Board of Education based on our status of our parents and what impact a hike in prices will have on their home budgets as well as what impact it will have in participation in our schools. Most of us feel we have hit the ceiling on meal prices and are now struggling to find other ways to economize within our programs.

Our programs support the efforts of our schools to open opportunities for learning. We want to continue to provide the best foods and eating experiences for all of our children. Your support will make that possible.

Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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